

At Your Service

The Tribune Institute

Housekeeping as a Profession

The New Citizen

The Linen Chest and How to Fill It

By ELENE FOSTER

NEVER did I expect to see the day when I should "take my pen in hand" to give advice to the young housekeeper. But with Cousin Editha's experience fresh in my mind I feel it my bounden duty to do my best to save both the time and the temper of other young war brides who may visit New York on the same errand which brought Cousin Editha here, namely, the buying of household goods for the modest little house in which she and her soldier husband are to begin their married life.

Every day brings its quota of transports laden from bow to stern with khaki-clad figures coming back "home," and scattered throughout the country are hundreds of young women, wives and sweethearts of these fighting men, whose main object in life at the present moment is to see to it that this home is as perfect as their hands and brains can make it.

Small wonder that the ranks of the canteen workers, the motor corps and the Red Cross are depleted, and the shops where household furnishings are sold are thronged with eager, bright-eyed young women all actuated by the same purpose as my Cousin Editha.

Things went very smoothly with Editha during the first few days of her shopping tour. The fact that she could not always procure the articles on her list did not trouble her, for there were always substitutes to be had, and this gave an added interest to the task.

"This war has been a wonderful thing for this country," she informed me, with all the wisdom of her twenty years. "It has developed resources that we never dreamed that we had—why, there's a substitute for everything under the shining sun, made right here in this country, and most of them are exactly as good as the imported article."

And so she went on through carpets and furniture, lighting fixtures, kitchen utensils and all the rest until finally she came to the buying of her household linen.

"Look at this," she called to me one her quest for linen, "two brand new \$59 bills! This is Aunt Barbara's present, morning as she was starting forth on \$100 to be spent solely on the household linen. 'A dozen of everything, my dear,' said she, 'and if there is anything left over, you can buy a nice silver fern dish

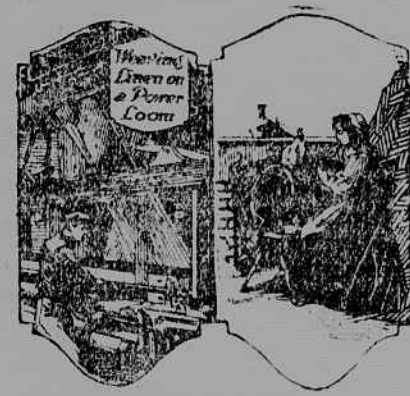
for the centre of the table.' I shall be back early to-day, for I am going to just one good linen store and get a dozen of the best of everything. It may take me some time to select the fern dish, though," she added.

When Hope Flies From the Hope Chest

It was after 6 o'clock when a weary, bedraggled little figure presented herself at my door.

"I've had a perfectly wretched day," she moaned, "and I take back all that I said about the war and our resources and substitutes! I never was so discouraged in all my life. Cousin Elene, there is no substitute for linen." And she sank down, a crumpled heap, on the sofa.

"And they talk about a 'Hope Chest,'" she went on; "take it from me, a 'Hope Chest' at the present writing is the most utterly hopeless thing in the whole world. I've spent the whole livelong day in linen shops. I've been from The Grande Maison de Blanc, in Fifth Avenue, to Hearn's, in Fourteenth Street, and it is the same story everywhere. Linen is worth its weight in gold, and



Housekeepers and Flying Men Will Have Linen

"The little lady is right in the matter of substitutes," he said. "There is absolutely no substitute for linen. If one could have been found it would most certainly have been pressed into the air service. It was not for lack of experimenting that none was discovered, for all sorts of threads were woven for the purpose and all sorts of preparations were smeared over these materials,

cotton and linen. There are mixtures of the two, but these goods play a very small part on the programme, for to the woman who has always been accustomed to buy pure linen there is no distinction. Either a piece of goods is pure linen or it is cotton; the small percentage of linen which may be mixed with the cotton does not change the character of the fabric in her mind. 'Pigs is pigs,' and that's all there is to it."

Buy Less But Get More for Your Money

"But how are people in moderate circumstances able to afford linen at the prices that are asked for it to-day?" asked Editha.

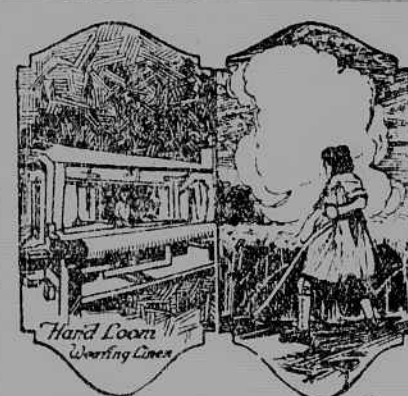
"By putting quality before quantity," replied The-Man-Who-Knows-About-Linen. "By buying half as much as they did when prices were half as high. And that is my advice to all you young women who are just beginning housekeeping: forget grandmother's rule for the linen chest, 'a dozen of everything.' Make it a half dozen until things get a little more normal; buy the same good quality goods but buy fewer pieces. With a little forethought as to the laundry and a judicious use of the various pieces you can easily get along with the half dozen."

"But suppose I should wait a month or two. I can do that, for I am sure that my husband won't be discharged before that time. Won't the prices be lower then?" asked Editha.

Dismal Prophecies On Near-Future Prices

"Let me explain," said The-Man-Who-Knows-About-Linen. "The flax from which linen is made is raised, for the most part, in Russia, Germany, France, Belgium and Ireland (two-thirds of the entire amount, by the way, comes from Russia). Now, with conditions as they are in Russia there isn't much hope of obtaining flax from there, at least not during 1919. Germany is out of the question. The flax fields of Belgium and Northern France have been entirely demolished, and it will take quite some time to get the soil in good condition again, to say nothing of finding laborers to do the work.

"This leaves practically only Ireland to supply the flax for the next year at least. The Irish linen was all commandeered, you know, by the British government during the war for the making of aeroplane wings, and after the armistice was



signed and the linen was released the government guaranteed the same prices to the farmers and linen manufacturers which they had been receiving during the war, and which, owing to the high cost of labor and other overhead expenses, were far and away higher than any pre-war prices.

"So you see the outlook is not very encouraging. It will be several years before the price of linen drops to any ap-

proachable extent, and it will never—no, never—be as low as it was before the war. Therefore my advice to you is this: If you are contemplating buying linen at any time during the next two years DO IT NOW, for you will probably have to pay even more in a few months from now than you do to-day.

"As a matter of fact," he continued, "the majority of the linen shops and the department stores are selling linen to-day at retail for less than they themselves would be obliged to pay for the same

goods if they were buying them from the wholesale houses at the present time. Fortunately for the consumer, many of these merchants had a very large stock of linens on hand when the war broke out, and they therefore have not been obliged as yet to replenish their stock, and they have been generous enough to give their customers the benefit of their foresight. But just you wait until they are obliged to buy of the dealers at the wholesale prices of the present time and you will see the linen soar higher than it ever did on an aeroplane."

For and Against South Sea Island Cotton Damask

"How about cotton goods?" I asked. "I understand that the price of those has gone up even more than that of linens." "It has advanced about 300 per cent within the last year," was the reply, "but recently there was quite a little slump in the prices, though they are still very far from normal, and it is difficult to predict just what is going to happen in this line of goods."

"Some one recommended South Sea Isl-

Away With the Linen Sheets

"Are linen sheets as high as other linen goods?" asked Editha, "because I want at least one pair of linen sheets most awfully."

"They are just about three times as expensive as they were before the war," answered The-Man-Who-Knows-About-Linen. "We get \$20 a pair for linen sheets and that isn't high for them, as things are now. If I were you I'd substitute in most cases nice, fine cotton percale at \$5.25 a pair."

"It looks as if I should be obliged to do that," sighed Editha. "And if I did that, can you tell me just how much I could get for my \$100?"

A salesman was asked to make out a list, which is given in Table No. 1. Bedding is of percale, table napery and towels of linen, and the miscellaneous small pieces of cotton.

"Let's suppose that we could persuade Aunt Barbara to double her gift," I suggested. "What could be done for \$200?"

The answer is given in Table No. 2. "The \$100 list is quite good enough for poor folks," said Editha, "only I must insist on stripes on my table-cloths."

As we left the shop, after having placed the order and selected the patterns, Editha turned to me:

"That lovely silver fern dish is buried in a linen shroud," she said.

[AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT: Nine of the leading department stores and specialty shops were consulted by Miss Foster in preparing this authoritative article on the linen market. We are, however, indebted to Mr. Alexander McCann, of McCutcheon's, for the shopping list and most of the basic facts—Director, Tribune Institute.]

1—A \$100 Hope Chest

Two tablecloths, 2x2, at \$6 each.....	\$12.00
One dozen 5x napkins.....	7.00
One cloth, 2x3.....	9.50
One dozen 3x napkins.....	8.50
One cloth, 2x2½.....	7.25
Four pairs D. B. sheets, at \$5.25 a pair.....	21.00
Four pairs pillow cases, at \$1.40 a pair.....	5.60
One and a half dozen hand towels, at \$9 a dozen.....	13.50
One-half dozen bath towels.....	3.30
One bath mat.....	2.00
One dozen dish towels.....	4.50
Four face cloths.....	.30
Two dish cloths.....	.30
One table pad.....	4.95
	\$100.00

Aunt Barbara's \$100 won't even buy the tablecloths."

"Let's forget it for to-night," I said. "We'll have a nice dinner uptown and we'll go to a theatre, and to-morrow I will take you to a man who knows all about linen, and he'll find a way out of your trouble, I am sure."

And so the next morning bright and early we sat in the little glassed-in office in the corner of a big Fifth Avenue linen shop and listened to the wisdom that fell from the lips of The-Man-Who-Knows-About-Linen.

but not one could compare with the good, old-fashioned linen cloth for durability, for resisting all kinds of weather and for the quality which made a bullet leave a clean-cut hole with no ragged edges or tearing of the threads. Small wonder that the flying men refused to fly with anything but pure linen wings.

"It's the same with the housewives," he continued; "as the advertisement says, 'having once used linen, I will use no other.' No substitute has come out of the war; the matter remains as it has been for centuries, the choice is between

Dr. Warren Tells Why the Cow Jumped Over the Moon

An Interview

[Dr. G. F. Warren, of the New York State College of Agriculture, is the author of the famous Warren formula for determining the cost of production of milk, which played such a conspicuous role in the recent "milk strike." We have no quarrel with the formula, but maintained then, as now, that it was never intended to be used as a weapon for price fixing and promoting strikes on a vital food necessity like milk. We are glad to print Dr. Warren's very clear cut answers to these pointed questions on New York farming conditions showing the reasons for the rising price of milk. The milk problem is more important than all other food problems combined and the one that most vitally concerns women and children.

Women are the food buyers, and their failure to understand food conditions is a serious factor in the problem in its last analysis—when buyer and retailer meet, often in anger. Every woman ought to know where she stands on the milk question, and what she thinks should be done about solving it. As Professional Housekeepers with the families of the state to feed, or as New Citizens, with the power of the vote to wield, they must look at all sides of the situation in order

to be fair. And the city woman must be interested in the country woman's side of the case—farmers have wives nearly always. Just sitting down and "hollering" for cheap milk won't produce it. ANNE LEWIS PIERCE, Director, The Tribune Institute.]

1—Why was milk so cheap for many years?

Seventy years ago New York produced more of many kinds of agricultural products than it produces to-day. More corn for grain, wheat, rye, barley, flax, were produced seventy years ago than are produced to-day. There were ten times as many sheep, four times as many hogs, more horses and more farmers than there are to-day.

When a village loses one-third of its inhabitants its house rents become practically free. When a state loses one-third of its farmers its farms often sell for less than the buildings cost. A very large proportion of the farms in New York have been on the market for years at less than the buildings are worth, to say nothing of the great expense for other kinds of improvements. The products of New York farms have been selling on this kind of basis, which bears

the same relationship to prosperity that a "rent free" house bears to prosperity in a town.

A declining agriculture has made farm products sell on the basis of little return for the buildings and improvements previously made on farms. But when demands for food are not satisfied by the quantity produced on this basis agriculture must be built up.

A farmer may use an old dairy barn and count its value as nothing rather than stop business, but when expansion is demanded he will not build new barns unless he has hopes that the money will be returned. A very large part of the farms of New York need new barns, or decided improvements to present barns.

Farmers may continue to use land that is cleared and drained and count it of no value rather than abandon the farm, but they will not drain and clear new land unless they hope to be paid for the labor. Nearly all the land in New York State needs tile drainage. Relatively speaking, very little land has been cleared or drained in New York for fifty years.

Men will exhaust the lime and phosphorus in the soil and count it of no value rather than leave the farm, but they will not buy lime and phosphorus and put them on the land unless they hope to get their money back. Nearly all of New York State needs repeated applications of lime and phosphorus.

The reason why milk was so cheap for so many years was that it was being produced by a declining agriculture, just as rents are cheap in a village that is declining.

2—Was the dairy farmer losing money all these years?

The dairy farmer who built a barn or improved his farm was, in general, losing money. The farmer who bought his farm with buildings on the place and got it all for less than the barn cost may have made money on his investment. The farmer who allowed his buildings to decay, impoverished his soil, sold his wood lot and never spent any money, did not lose any money. He could not lose any if he never spent any. The worst that could happen to him was that he received low wages for his time.

3—Why did the farmer continue to sell milk at a loss?

The farmers did not all continue to sell milk at a loss. One in every three of them quit. In 1840 there were 455,954 persons engaged in agriculture in New York State; in 1910 there were 376,198. On April 21, 1917, the total number of males fourteen years old or older, living or working on farms, was 329,019.

On June 1, 1900, New York State had 1,501,608 dairy cows; on February 1, 1918, it had 1,375,793.

The reason that the city gets its sup-

ply of milk is not because dairying is increasing, but because it is reaching out further and further into butter and cheese territory. There are limits, however, beyond which it is not feasible to go because of the expense in shipping milk.

4—Why did milk jump in price all at once?

The reason why milk jumped in price so much all at once is the same as the reason why all other commodities jumped in price—financial inflation. Milk has risen in price less than the general price level of all commodities and less than the general rise in price of all foods. The sudden rise in price is due to inflation. Prices are all relative. Milk is one of the cheap foods. According to the United States Bureau of Labor, wholesale prices of all foods in August averaged 92 per cent higher than in 1913. Milk in New York that retailed at 9 cents a quart in 1913 now retails at 16 cents, an increase of 78 per cent.

For years the products of the Middle West fed New York, but the fertile fields of the Middle West are all now in use. Moreover, the product of Western farms is no longer cheap. The New York farmer is no longer compelled to be a dairyman or quit farming. He can now raise grain and sheep. No longer can milk be obtained in sufficient supply, ex-

cept on the basis of paying the farmer reasonable wages.

The time has come when the great agricultural resources of New York and other Eastern states must be developed. This development is not to help the farmer, but is a necessity for our cities. The farmer can escape from intolerable conditions as he has escaped in the past. There are only two persons working on New York farms, where in 1840 there were three. Of the sons of the present farm operators in New York 46,367 are working at some industry other than farming. In the year ending February 1, 1918, 21,430 persons left New York farms to go to work in other industries, and 13,894 came back to farms from other industries. The individual farmer has a way of appearing in town when farming conditions get too bad.

But the city cannot afford to develop at the expense of agriculture. We have had too much of this unsound growth in the past. The only sound basis for democracy is to have the reward for a given amount of industry and skill as great in one industry as in another.

5—Is there danger that farmers will extort too high prices for food?

Farming is a free industry and thou-

sands of persons who are skilled in it are not working at it. The consumers need have no fear that farmers can hold prices too high. There are thousands of trained farmers working in towns, villages and cities all over the state, and there are thousands of acres waiting for them to farm, and thousands more acres that are only half farmed. Thousands of other farmers and farmers' sons sleep on their farms, but neglect their farms and daily go to cities to work. The minute the prices of farm products rise so as to make farming pay better than city labor these persons return to farms by the hundreds. And the minute city wages pay better than farming, as they did in 1918, the movement is to cities. There is no monopoly in farming and no limitation in output. Since farm families are large, there is a great surplus of persons skilled in farming who are always ready to work at the job—when it pays.

But they are not going to work at it in sufficient numbers unless they have better school facilities, better medical service, better housing conditions, more convenient barns, and higher wages than New York farms now have.

Worry Saving Stamps

EDITOR'S NOTE: If you have an original Thrift Stunt of your own report it to the Director of The Tribune Institute and you will get four Thrift Stamps in exchange, provided the idea is new and practical enough to print.

"How many 'Worry Saving Stamps' have you?" archly asked a jolly, rosy cheeked little girl of the slender, proper little friend beside her. The two were seated in front of the computer, who heard the first youngster giggle, merrily contemplating her friend's inevitable query.

"Worry Saving Stamps?" The query was inevitable.

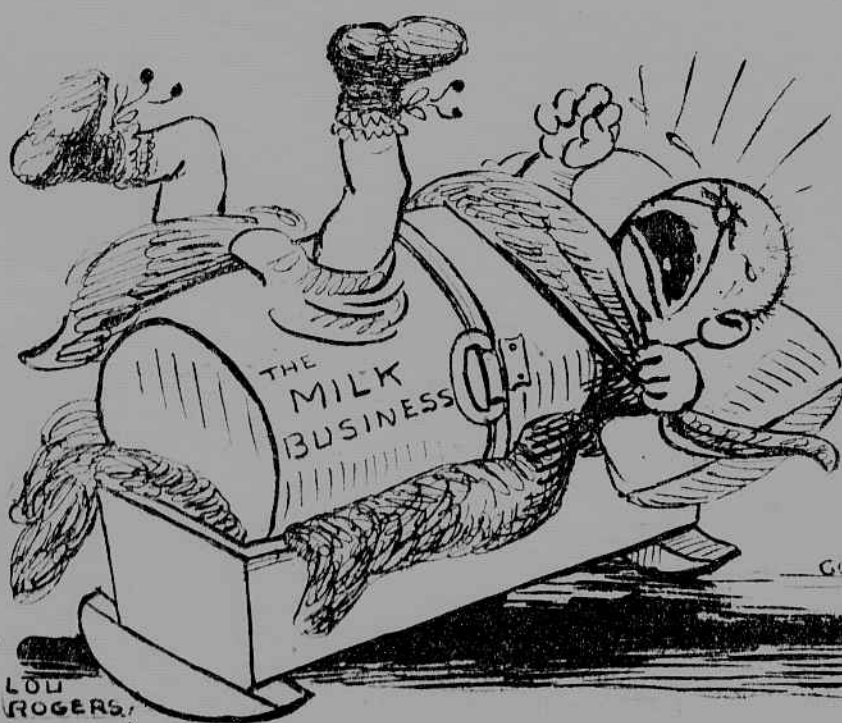
"Yes," she said with a roguish little laugh. "I have earned a card and a half of them already."

"Earned them! Do tell me what you are talking about, Bonnie."

"Oh it's a 'remembering' game I play at home," chuckled Bonnie. "It used to

away my toys, and hang up my clothes, and brush my teeth, and—oh, lots of things like that. So when I wanted some Thrift stamps mother said that she would give me five cents toward them for everything I remembered. We had lots of fun making a list of all the things. Mother keeps that. I can't see it because it wouldn't be remembering if I looked. We go over it every night and see how well I have remembered. At first I missed a lot of things; but now I have the habit, and almost never miss one. And it is such fun! It saves mother so much worry about me that she calls the big stamps 'Worry Saving Stamps' instead of War Savings Stamps."

The commuter had to leave the profitable conversation at this point; but she went her way visualizing the fun that there had been in evolving this useful slogan. Evidently Bonnie was of a household that turned its sense of humor to account. H. B. O.



Institute Tested Recipes

[Editor's Note: These contributed recipes have all been tested and endorsed by our Domestic Science Expert. We pay \$1 for each recipe that is printed. If contributors wish to have rejected recipes returned, stamps must be enclosed.]

Mushrooms and Pimientos

2 tablespoonsful oleo ½ lb. mushrooms
2 sliced canned 1 cupful milk
pimientos 1 tablespoonful flour
1½ tablespoonsful Salt and cayenne to
taste
Melt oleo in saucepan, add sliced mushrooms and brown slightly. Stir in the catsup and add cleaned broken mushrooms. Simmer about seven minutes. Mix flour in a little of the milk and add it with the remainder of the milk to the mushroom mixture. Season to taste with salt and cayenne and bring to a boil. Serve hot on toast.—R. A. W., New York City.

The broiled or sautéed mushrooms with

lovers of mushrooms best. However, for those who want something "different" or, when the "button" mushrooms or the canned product of less distinctive flavor are used, the recipe will prove very appetizing. It is especially good for luncheon or supper prepared in a chafing dish and costs only 50 cents to serve five persons.

Cheese Cakes

2 tablespoonsful oleo 4 tablespoonsful
3½ tablespoonsful of grated American
cheese
¼ teaspoonful paprika 3 egg whites
¼ teaspoonful salt
Melt oleo, add flour, salt, paprika, cheese and whites of eggs, whipped light and dry. Fold in the egg whites and drop from the tip of a spoon onto a greased baking pan. Bake in a moderate oven.—M. J. S., New York City.

This recipe will make one dozen light, fluffy cheese cakes at a cost of less than 20 cents. They are excellent for a salad accompaniment and are very easily and